

Prasangika Madhyamika tenet:

According to the Prasangika Madhyamika tenet, conventional truths cannot be divided into true and unreal conventional truths because all conventional truths are deceptive and therefore not true. Conventional truths are deceptive because to sentient beings' direct perceivers they always appear to exist inherently. Hence, conventional truths are unreal whereas ultimate truths are true. Ultimate truths are true or non-deceptive because to sentient beings' direct perceivers they never appear to exist inherently but appear to be empty of existing inherently.

However, the proponents of the Prasangika tenet assert that *relative to the perspective of the world* objects which are not ultimate truths can be categorized into those that are *true* and those that are *unreal*.

Furthermore, just as conventional phenomena can in general be categorized into subjects (awarenesses) and objects (objects of those awarenesses) likewise there are:

- a) subjects (awarenesses) that are true and unreal *relative to the perspective of the world*, and
- b) objects (objects of those awarenesses) that are true and unreal *relative to the perspective of the world*

Subjects (awarenesses) that are true and unreal relative to the perspective of the world

Chandrakirti says in his **Supplement to the Middle Way**:

The perceivers of falsehood too are accepted to be of two kinds:

That of the clear senses and that of impaired senses.

The cognitions of those with impaired senses

Are, in contrast to the unimpaired senses, accepted to be unreal.

Here falsehood refers to objects that are either conventional truths or do not exist. The perceiving of falsehood, or in other words, awarenesses perceiving falsehood are *relative to the perspective of the world* of two kinds:

1. Awarenesses (clear senses) that are true *relative to the perspective of the world*, and
2. Awarenesses (impaired senses) that are unreal *relative to the perspective of the world*

Awarenesses (clear senses) that are true relative to the perspective of the world:

Awarenesses (clear senses), that are true *relative to the perspective of the world*, are awarenesses which are not impaired by superficial causes of error and only exist in the continua of those who have never taken emptiness/the ultimate truth to mind. Here 'clear' means not affected by superficial causes of error and 'senses' refers to any of the six consciousnesses, the five sense consciousnesses (eye consciousness, ear consciousness, and so forth) and the mental sense consciousness.

Those awarenesses are true *relative to the perspective of the world* because worldly beings who have never taken emptiness/the ultimate truth to mind perceive them to be true or correct.

The meaning of awarenesses, that are true relative to the perspective of the world, is:

Awarenesses which are considered correct consciousnesses by those who have never taken emptiness to mind.

Instances of awarenesses that are true *relative to the perspective of the world*, are: an eye consciousness apprehending a pot, a mental consciousness that realizes the lack of a permanent, partless, independent person, a mental consciousness that apprehends the 'I' to exist inherently, and so forth.

Awarenesses (impaired senses) that are unreal relative to the perspective of the world

Awarenesses (impaired senses), that are unreal *relative to the perspective of the world*, are wrong consciousnesses whose main objects do not exist and who only exist in the continua of those who have never taken emptiness/the ultimate truth to mind.

Here 'impaired' means wrong and 'senses' refers to any of the six consciousnesses, the five sense consciousnesses (eye consciousness, ear consciousness, and so forth) and the mental sense consciousness. Those awarenesses are unreal *relative to the perspective of the world* because worldly beings who have never taken emptiness/the ultimate truth to mind perceive them to be unreal or wrong.

The meaning of awarenesses, that are unreal relative to the perspective of the world, is:

Awarenesses which are considered wrong consciousnesses by those who have never taken emptiness to mind.

Instances, of awarenesses that are unreal *relative to the perspective of the world*, are: an eye consciousness that perceives the reflection of a face in a mirror to be a face, an ear consciousness that perceives a person's echo to be that person's voice, a mental consciousness that perceives a self-sufficient substantially existent person, and so forth.

Causes of error:

There are various causes of error that impair an awareness. Those causes of error may be superficial, intellectually acquired or innate. Superficial causes of error are temporary causes of error. For instance, an eye consciousness apprehending the horns of a rabbit arises due to superficial causes of error, such as the rabbit being far away from the perceiver so that its long ears are misperceived to be horns. On the other hand, a mind that apprehends, for instance, phenomena to exist inherently can be of two types: (1) intellectually acquired and (2) innate. An innate awareness that apprehends phenomena to exist inherently arises naturally and its continuum has been with us since beginningless time. An intellectually acquired awareness that apprehends phenomena to exist inherently is the result of the innate awareness that apprehends phenomena to exist inherently. Furthermore, it is the result of intellectual reasoning which, on the basis of innately apprehending phenomena to exist inherently, concludes that phenomena *really* exist that way.

Many texts on *Awareness and Knowledge* or *Lorig* (which is one of the preparatory topics that is studied before the study of the ***Perfection of Wisdom Sutras***) describe four superficial causes of error. Those four superficial causes of error are:

- i. The cause of error existing in the object
- ii. The cause of error existing in the basis
- iii. The cause of error existing in the abode
- iv. The cause of error existing in the immediately preceding condition

Examples of those four are given in ***Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*** by Lati Rinpoche and Elizabeth Napper:

An example of a cause of error existing in the object is a consciousness perceiving a circle of fire due to a firebrand being twirled around quickly. An example of a cause of error existing in the basis is an eye consciousness which sees a single moon as double due to a fault in the eye.

An example of a cause of error existing in the abode or place is an eye consciousness which sees trees as moving when one is riding in a boat or car. An example of a cause of error existing in the immediately preceding condition is an eye consciousness which sees everything as red when one is overcome with anger.

Lama Tsongkhapa categorizes causes of error slightly differently during his exposition on the *Two Truths* in the ***Illumination of the Thought***:

Causes of error can be divided into:

1. Causes of error of sense consciousnesses and
2. Causes of error of mental sense consciousnesses

Causes of error of sense consciousnesses are also of two types:

1. External causes of error of sense consciousnesses and
2. Internal causes of error of sense consciousnesses

Examples of internal causes of error of sense consciousnesses:

- Having eye diseases such as cataract etc. that cause one to have the appearance of floating hair etc.
- Suffering from jaundice which causes one to see everything as yellow.
- Eating *Datura* or thorn apple which causes everything to appear as gold
- Epidemics and other diseases that alter one's sense perception, and so forth

Examples of external causes of error of sense consciousnesses:

- A mirror which causes one to perceive the reflection of a face to be the face
- Speaking in a cave which causes one to perceive a person's echo to be that person's voice
- The proximity of the spring sun to whitish sand which causes one to perceive a mirage of water to be water
- Mantras and medicinal substances applied by magicians etc., and so forth

